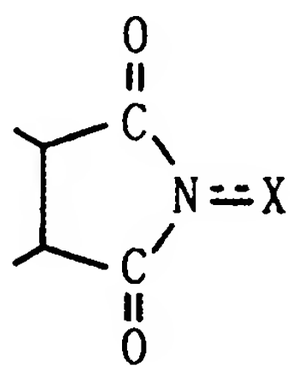
AMENDED CLAIM SET:

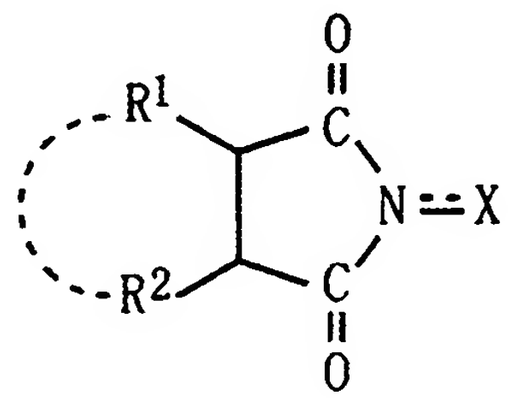
1. (previously presented) A catalyst comprising a cyclic imide compound, the cyclic imide compound having an N-substituted cyclic imide skeleton represented by following Formula (I):



(I)

wherein X is an oxygen atom or a hydroxyl group, wherein said catalyst has a solubility parameter of less than or equal to 26 $(MPa)^{1/2}$ as determined by Fedors method.

2. (original) The catalyst according to claim 1, wherein the cyclic imide compound is a compound represented by following Formula (1):

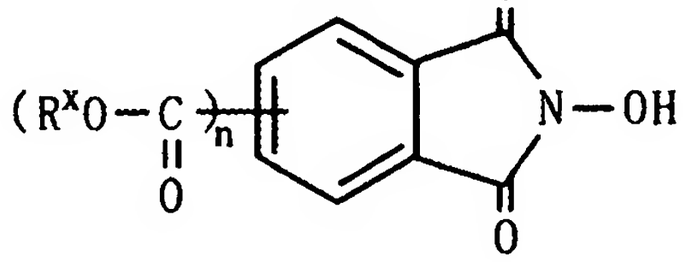


(1)

wherein R^1 and R^2 are the same or different and are each a hydrogen atom, a halogen atom, an alkyl group, an aryl group, a cycloalkyl group, a hydroxyl group, an alkoxy group, a carboxyl group, a substituted oxycarbonyl group, an acyl group or an acyloxy group, where R^1 and R^2 may be combined to form a double bond or an aromatic or non-aromatic ring; one or two of N-substituted cyclic imido group indicated in Formula (1) may be further

formed on R^1, R^2, or on the double bond or aromatic or non-aromatic ring formed by R^1 and R^2; and X is an oxygen atom or a hydroxyl group.

3. (previously presented) The catalyst according to claim 2, wherein the cyclic imide compound is a compound represented by following Formula (II):



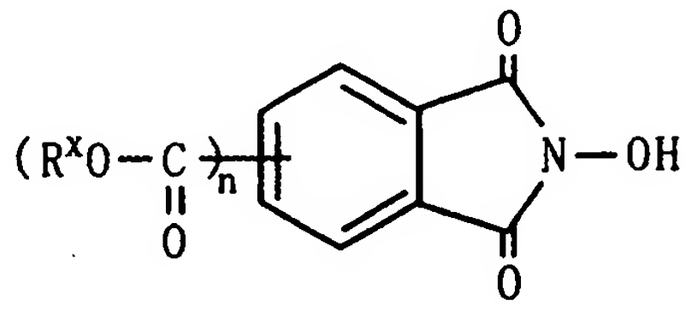
(II)

wherein R^x is a hydrocarbon group having five or more carbon atoms; and n denotes an integer of from 1 to 4, where the groups $-C(=O)-OR^x$ may be the same or different when n is equal to or more than 2.

4. (original) The catalyst according to any one of claims 1 to 3, further comprising a metallic compound.

5. – 9. (cancelled).

10. (new) A catalyst comprising a cyclic imide compound represented by following Formula (II):



(II)

wherein R^x is a hydrocarbon group having five or more carbon atoms; and n denotes an integer of from 1 to 4, where the groups $-C(=O)-OR^x$ may be the same or different when n is equal to or more than 2.

11. (new) The catalyst compound of claim 10 identified as 4-dodecyloxycarbonyl-N-hydroxyphthalimide, having a Fedors solubility parameter of 24.7.

12. (new) The catalyst compound of claim 1 identified as 4-decyloxycarbonyl-N-hydroxyphthalimide, having a Fedors solubility parameter of 25.4.

13. (new) The catalyst compound of claim 10 identified as 4,5-bis(hexyloxycarbonyl)-N-hydroxyphthalimide, having a Fedors solubility parameter of 25.5.

14. (new) The catalyst compound of claim 1 identified as 4,5-bis(octyloxycarbonyl)-N-hydroxyphthalimide, having a Fedors solubility parameter of 24.3.